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Press Release

Hialeah Mayor Determined to Raise High School Graduation Rates

Hialeah, Florida – Hialeah Mayor Julio Robaina and the City Council along with School Board Member, Perla Tabares Hantman; Regional Superintendents, Marcos Moran and George Nunez, celebrated yesterday the groundbreaking of a new charter school, whose focus will be to prepare students in grades 9 through 12 for successful careers.

The school will serve as a training ground for Hialeah students to gain both a formal high school diploma and the necessary technical skills to be the city's future leaders. Students will be trained in careers such as police officers, firefighters and medical assistants. "This academy will serve to train our city, by our city, for our city," the Mayor exclaimed proudly.

Mayor Robaina, is very determined to raise high school graduation rates, and mentioned that the roots for this school began many years ago as a personal goal while he was still Council President and fought alongside the Florida League of Cities (FLC) and his friends in the legislature to make this Academy a reality for the children of the City of Hialeah. "We have accepted low high school graduation rates for too long; I do not believe that a 56 percent or even a 65 percent graduation rate is acceptable in today's world and especially not for my community."

This massive project, which has cost over \$3 million, was funded by special state appropriated funds coming from the Florida Department of Education while the land and the construction is being funded by the City of Hialeah. The project began in January of 2008 and is scheduled to be completed for the upcoming school year, which begins in August. The two-story, 22,000 square feet facility will initially house 200 students during stage one with a potential expansion for an additional 200 students.

According to Mayor Robaina, this facility will serve as a community education center for people of all ages to be trained and to obtain their GED's even after normal school hours. "This Career Academy will serve as an economic stimulus that will help people not only find jobs, but find careers," the Mayor said. "We will provide an education that won't compete with other counties or states; we want a 21st Century Education that will compete with that of India, China & Europe."

Otto Drozd, the City of Hialeah's Fire Department Chief, said that this vocational school will open a way for the "youth of Hialeah to pursue a career within the Hialeah Fire Department" or any other career for which they feel interest. "This career academy opens up many opportunities for the young people that don't have a set career goal and need some type of guidance."

In addition, Mark N. Overton, the City of Hialeah's Chief of Police, commented that the opening of this vocational school will be a model for other cities throughout the United States of America. "This type of school will assist young people in building the skills they will need to one day qualify to become police officers. They will learn that the choices they make growing up will impact on

whether they will be able to be considered for a position in law enforcement. Communities need to start growing their own police officers.”

The school, to be named the City of Hialeah Educational Academy, will be located at 2590 W 76 St.